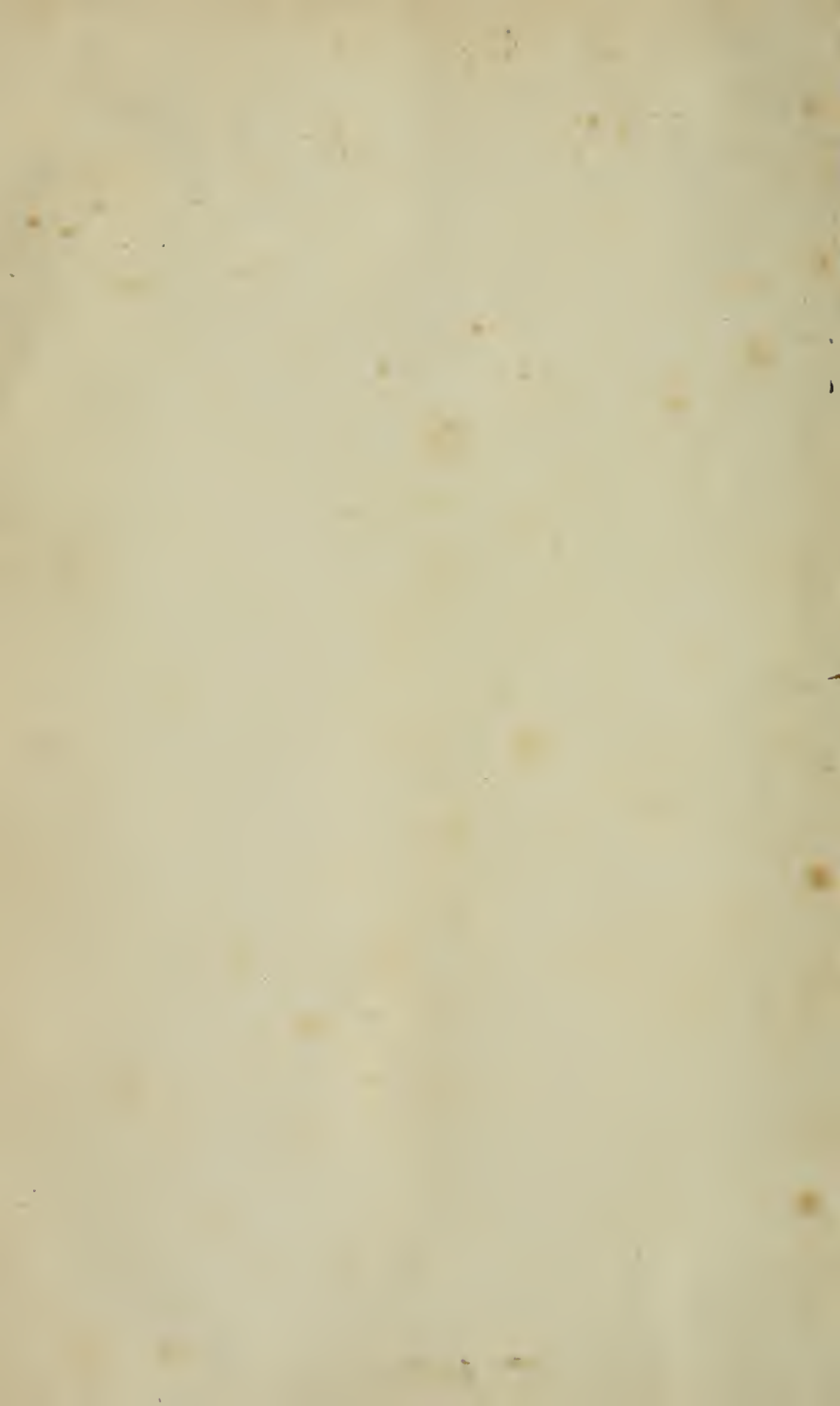


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REPORT

OF

A DRAWING-ROOM CONFERENCE

ON

BOARDING-OUT PAUPER CHILDREN

JUNE 1876

LONDON

LONGMANS, GREEN, AND CO.

1876

Price One Shilling



ORPHAN PAUPER CHILDREN.

THE SUBJECT of Boarding-out Pauper Children was brought before a meeting of Ladies and Gentlemen at the house of Sir Charles Trevelyan, Bart., K.C.B., at Grosvenor Crescent, London, on the 10th of June 1876, and addresses were made as to the actual work, and the results of it on the children so trained. Among those present were Baroness Burdett Coutts, Countess Ducie, the Honble. Mrs. William Lowther, Lady Holland, Sir Fowell and Lady Victoria Buxton, Sir Stafford and Lady Northcote, Mr. and Mrs. J. R. Hollond, Miss Octavia Hill, Miss Collett Poor Law Guardian, Miss Allen Secretary to the Nottingham Guild of Charity, Mr. Hedley Metropolitan Poor Law Inspector, the Rev. R. J. Simpson, the Rev. J. F. Kitto, Mr. Melville Portal, Mr. W. Pole Carew, Mr. W. M. Wilkinson, and many others.

In opening the meeting Sir CHARLES TREVELYAN said—The best return I can make for the great kindness you have done Lady Trevelyan and me in honouring us with your company is to detain you as short time as possible from the practical details which will be given by the speakers who are to succeed me. The object for which we are assembled is not to promote the interests of a single orphanage, but to make suitable provision for all pauper orphans in England and Wales—children who have a double claim upon our Christian sympathy, both as being destitute and as being orphans. About the mode of providing for them a great controversy arose. All were agreed that they should not be brought up in the workhouse; but two alternatives presented themselves—one that the children should be herded together like sheep or oxen; the other that they should be brought up in small family groups, according to God's appointment for the human race. This

forms one of the main distinctions between the human race and the lower animals. We are not met here to-day to revive the controversy as to these alternatives. We shall not say a word against the Metropolitan District Schools, which are now managed as much for the benefit of the children as the system allows; but we may speak without offence of the transforming influence of the divine institution of the Family and of the Home. This is by no means limited to the ordinary relation of parent and child, for nature has armed children with such a sweet attractive grace that they rapidly insinuate themselves into the affections of foster-parents, and many a lone elderly widow has had her existence cheered by a boarded-out child. Those who have passed part of their lives in the East require no argument to convince them of this, for, time out of mind, the adopted child there has been as much loved and cared for as the child born in the ordinary course of nature. It is also well known to Anglo-Indians that their children become like sons and daughters to the persons by whom they are brought up in England. The power of a real family home comes out by comparison with the opposite 'aggregate' system. In the Home, or Family system, the children are educated in their affections and bodily health, as well as in their intellects. They are brought into contact with actual practical life at every point—household arrangements in all their details—the productions of nature in their various seasons—the animal creation with their different habits. Then the children have intercourse with persons of every age and rank, and they get more than usual benefit from the village school, because their regular attendance is secured, and the school profits in return by their example. When they are of an age to earn their own living the boys have a choice of employments, instead of being consigned, as pauper boys generally are, to some special occupation; and the girls are assisted by their foster parents and superintending ladies to obtain places in respectable families.

But, you will ask, what particular end we have proposed to ourselves in inviting your presence this day.

The truth is, that after having spent more than seven years in discussing the subject, we think it is high time to take effective action upon it. If boarding-out is founded upon the sound principle claimed for it, the practice ought to be extended throughout the country; while, on the other hand, if this high pretension cannot be admitted, the practice ought to give way to some better system. We also wish to collect in one point of view all the scattered efforts which are in progress in various quarters, so that those who look favourably upon the movement may take heart, know who their friends are, and see how they can best aid the good cause. In Scotland the Boarding-out system has been in operation for more than a hundred years. There are no pauper schools there—neither ‘workhouse,’ ‘separate,’ nor ‘district’—but the whole of the pauper orphans and deserted children are depauperised and absorbed into the mass of the population by means of this system. This is done through the agency of their excellent Parochial Poor Law officers, supervised by the three inspecting officers. In this country, under Mr. Goschen’s comprehensive and well-considered order of November 1870, the pauper orphans of England are commended to the care of the ladies of England. The plan is that small committees of ladies, clergymen, and others, should take charge of the orphan and deserted children of their respective unions, and, as far as local circumstances allow, of London and the other large towns; that they should select the foster parents, superintend the bringing up of the children, and assist in placing them out in life when they arrive at a suitable age. In these days, when ‘woman’s work’ is so much discussed, can there be a work more truly beneficent, more entirely feminine, than this, to engage the energies of the wives and daughters of England? A great deal has been said about safeguards. If our ladies throughout the country, with the aid of their husbands and brothers, would take the matter in hand in their respective unions, this would in itself be the highest safeguard. But, besides this, there is the responsibility of the Guardians, who of course satisfy themselves that the children for whom

they are responsible are properly cared for; and there is, in addition, the general superintendence of the Local Government Board, conducted by its admirably efficient staff of Inspectors. We know by experience that it is no mere pretence on the part of the Guardians, for we have seen the Guardians of St. George's, Hanover Square, in the West of London, and of Whitechapel, Bethnal Green, and other unions in the East, take the most active interest in the question of boarding-out. They never place out their children until they have satisfied themselves that the children will be properly cared for, and they keep up their supervision by personal visits. I have just seen a report by the Bethnal Green Guardians of a visit made by them to Windermere and Troutbeck, where that parish had placed out some children as boarders in families. The report is extremely favourable to the system, and shows that it is no idle assertion to say that the Guardians who board out children will look after them from time to time. And as for the Poor Law Inspectors, it is not for me to say what an efficient and conscientious body of officers they are; and supposing that some are so overworked at present that they could not undertake new duties, nothing would be easier than to tell off two or three for this special work. I had hoped that Mr. Skelton, the Secretary of the Scotch Poor Law Board, would have been present to give us the experience they have had of the boarding-out system in that country, but, being unable to come, he has written me this letter:—

‘ Board of Supervision, Edinburgh :

8th June, 1876.

‘ Dear Sir Charles Trevelyan,—It is with extreme regret that I find it will be impossible for me to be present at your drawing-room party on Saturday. I hope that it may prove most successful, and that many of those who attend may be induced to take part in a work the good effects of which in Scotland it is almost impossible to overestimate.

‘ So far as we in Scotland are concerned, no further evidence is needed to prove that the system has been an unquali-

fied success. The returns which I obtained from upwards of 900 Inspectors of Poor* throughout Scotland prove that, for at least five-and-twenty years, multitudes of orphan and deserted children have been rescued from pauperism, have been trained to become decent citizens, and have been beneficially absorbed into the general population of the country. It seems, indeed, to be very generally admitted, even by the opponents of the system, that, where proper supervision can be obtained, the practice is conducive to the wellbeing of the children themselves. If this be so, surely a grave responsibility rests on those who oppose it solely on the ground that its introduction into England may affect the prosperity of the institutions in which these unfortunate children may have been hitherto placed. I cannot see, for my own part, that we are entitled to sacrifice a single child to the necessities of the Metropolitan District Schools; and I should be sorry to think that the usefulness of these schools depends upon such a sacrifice being made.

‘An experienced and eminent Inspector of the English Local Government Board writes to me, “The boarding-out of pauper children is being tested in my district under varied conditions. I have no doubt that the children will gain both physically and morally.” If this be admitted, what more is there to be said? But my correspondent fears—and this is another objection which has been constantly urged—that the system may lead to the desertion of children by those legally or morally bound to support them. You will recollect that Mr. Tuffnell stated, in support of this view, that the number of orphan and deserted children in Scotland chargeable to the rates was greatly in excess of the number in London. The fact is that last year there were only 6,000 of these children in all Scotland as against nearly 8,000 in the metropolis alone. But, apart from statistics, I confess that I have never been able to follow the reasoning on which the argument is based. Why should boarding-out be an inducement to desertion? What

* Otherwise called ‘Parochial Poor Law Officers.’ They are local officers combining the duties of Relieving Officer with those of Clerk to the Guardians.

is the motive which it supplies to persons who are proposing to desert their children? These persons, I should suppose, are not much accustomed to conduct an argument to its logical conclusions; and I doubt whether one mother in a thousand deserts her child because she happens to be an intelligent advocate of the boarding-out system, or because she has seriously considered what is likely to prove most conducive to the ultimate wellbeing of her offspring. Were we to analyse the motives which animate the class of people who desert their children, it would be found, I think, that the prospect of a child being lodged in a palatial edifice, more or less under the mother's eye, and within her reach, will prove a stronger inducement than the prospect of a child being taken away to an unknown part of the country and boarded in a labourer's cottage. (Hear, hear.)

‘Then it is said that you have no fit class of people in England to whom to entrust the children. You, Sir Charles, know more about the social and moral condition of rural England than I do; but I have recently heard from persons residing in various districts that in their own counties no difficulty on this score need be anticipated. (Hear.)

‘Let me say in conclusion that close, habitual, and vigilant supervision is the key-note of the system. If you can get district committees to undertake the work, and if you can put upon these committees ladies like Mrs. Senior or Miss Hill, I see no reason why the system should not succeed in England as it has succeeded in Scotland.

‘I am, dear Sir Charles,

‘Yours very truly,

‘JOHN SKELTON.’

As to certain persons having said that we have in rural England no fit class of persons to whom to entrust the children, those who say this libel rural England. Everybody who knows rural England knows that there are thousands of persons who can be safely trusted with the care of children, and that whatever the faults of our agricultural population may be, they are remarkable for

their kindness to one another. This letter tells its story so clearly that it is unnecessary for me to enlarge upon more than one point—that with regard to the relatives of the pauper child. A crucial test of the soundness of the boarding-out principle is the light in which it is regarded by the relatives of the child, for although best for the child, this system is least attractive to the relatives. Under the ‘aggregate school’ system the poor see a vast institution, in which the children are dressed in uniform, and the whole managed on a very expensive scale. They hear the institution highly praised, and they think it a fine thing to have their children brought up in such a place—in fact they regard the getting of their children into these aggregate or ‘district’ schools much as the upper classes regard sending their boys to Eton or Harrow. When the children of the poor are got into these district schools their friends are considered to be absolved from all responsibility, and they are relieved from all care regarding them beyond an occasional visit to them, which can be easily paid, because the children are all in one place in the neighbourhood of a great town. But when the children are put out as boarders it is a totally different thing, for the children remain in the face of day, and their presence in the homes of other persons of the class from which they came is a constant protest against their desertion and abandonment; and it must be said for our poor people that, corrupted as they have been by the Poor Law, they are not, after all, sunk so low as to permit their children to be entrusted to their equals. This, then, is at the bottom of this singular problem—the poor will not allow their children to be boarded-out in their own class, though they are quite willing to hand them over to large aggregate schools to be brought up in the uniform of an institution. Here is an illustration, written in idiomatic English, by one who has had practical experience:—

‘The three children, two girls and a boy, belong to one family. Their mother has been dead some years; their father “one fortnight and nearly another,” as they told my cook. They had not been a fortnight in their Union when a nurse and a Guardian brought them down here to be boarded-out under

the care of the Penn Committee. When the children found they were to be left here, the oldest girl, who had got very confidential with my cook, said that her uncle would be very angry when he knew it, for that he never would have let the gentlemen have them if he had not been promised that they should go to a beautiful school at Penge. My cook, knowing nothing of the matter, said, "You mean Penn, my dear; that's where you are come to;" but the child insisted it was Penge they were to have gone to—"ever such a nice place," she said, "near the Crystal Palace, and where uncle" told her "all the children wore a uniform." The poor child seemed very unhappy, and the cook asked her if her uncle was kind to her. She replied, "Yes, very," and that he had three children of his own, and would have taken them home too only the school they were going to was such a fine one; and he had promised to come and see them there. He told them, too, their grandfather was a rich man, and would, most likely, "do a deal" for them, when they left Penge, if they were good children. The eldest girl cried very much, saying her uncle now would never find her, for he would go to Penge and she would not be there. The children are pretty and attractive, and my maids were charmed by their manners. The cook told me this conversation as soon as they were gone, sympathising most deeply with them, and evidently thinking of them as children who had been kidnapped, and whose rich relations would be down upon us sooner or later.'

I will now read a letter from a lady who has requested that her name may be withheld, and all I will say about her is that she has very ably promoted boarding-out, and that she combines with the finest Irish humour the best English common sense. She says:—

'You ask me to give you some boarding-out experiences; but mine, compared with Miss Hill's, are so few and insignificant that, excepting that "every little makes a mickle," they would not be worth your reading. I never thought there was much in the fear I have heard frequently expressed that boarded-out children were liable to illtreatment. It happens

that for many years I have had a great deal to do with a large Ragged School. Occasionally among our very poor children an apparently well-cared-for upper-class child appeared. On inquiry I constantly found the child was a "nurse child" (boarded-out, in fact), and usually further investigation (made, you must note, because we wished to exclude better-class children from the school) elicited, "Oh, the mother has paid me nothing for a long time, but we have got fond of the child, and would not let it go to the Work-house." Next as to my own experiences. I think my first boarded-out child was a puny, delicate, wretched-looking little fellow, whom I took from his drinking mother. She told us "she had had fourteen children, and buried eleven; thought soon to bury this one. *Ill*; he was *always* ill. What was the use of a doctor for a child who constantly woke up in the night screaming with pain." This amiable woman excused the cruel way in which she beat the little fellow by saying that she "really could not help beating him, *he was so like his father.*" You can guess whether such a child, puny, sickly, and as dirty as you can imagine from the care of such a mother, would be likely to be at first sight attractive! I sent him down to a gardener and his wife, living in the country. As to how it answered, I will remark that when, in order to get better schooling than the village afforded, I sent him to school elsewhere, it was to the foster-parents the little fellow confided he was not happy (not to me or to his drinking mother). On this advice I moved him. Now, at eighteen years old, he spends all his holidays with them (he is a pupil teacher), and these country folk are as proud of his achievements and the little distinctions he gets at examinations etc. as if he were their own boy.

' But this, of course, is a case of private boarding-out. The system under the Local Government Board does not, however, differ in its results. We have now twelve little children boarded-out under the Local Government Board regulations in one village. A lady there writes: "You cannot think what love seems to have awakened, not only in the heart of the foster-parents, but

in the villagers generally, to the little orphans. One little girl is with two middle-aged women, who live with an old mother. When the old woman was dying, I proposed to move little May for a time. 'Please don't; she is like a bit of sunshine in the house.' Another pair of old maids thought they should like two boarded-out girls; but the house, a trim tidy cottage, looked as if no boy had ever set foot therein, and they 'did not want a boy; oh, no!' Circumstances made me desire to send the brother of the little girls into the same village. I telegraphed to the clergyman to know if a certain family, who had already two boys, would take another. The reply was, 'No; but Wheatley, where the little girls are, would take him for a time; of course not permanently.' The little fellow was not an attractive child, I thought. We could not get word or look or smile from him, and but for an energetic 'Please' when I proposed moving him from the district school, I might have thought him dumb. When I went into the country, a week after he had been sent down, I went to see all the boarded-out children. This little 'Harry' still looked glum, quite unlike the others. On inquiry, I found the poor little lad had thought that on my advent he would be moved. 'But you don't want to keep him, Mary?' said I to one old maid. 'Oh, yes, please; all he is anxious about is lest you should move him. We should like to make a home for him even when he gets big enough to work on a farm. We have got him a nice little room, all to himself, and he says if you move him he shall get up in the night and run back to his aunt Mary'—an aunt of a week's acquaintance. You should have seen the child's look of delight when I said, 'All right, Harry, I shan't move you if you are a good boy.' 'Oh! he is a good boy!' said the fictitious aunt eagerly, and half affronted. One woman said, 'Are not the London children like little princes?' We feared some jealousy because their clothes were new, and answered, 'Its having all things new at once.' 'I didn't mean their dress, ma'am; their *manners* are so pretty; they run up and kiss you.'" Everywhere the same tale; while the children seemed in a state of happiness, like purring cats. But I have

little to say against the management of the large schools. I happened to go over some a few years ago, and thought, "Oh! all these tremendous expenses may, after all, be right; children brought up with such advantages must do well." But in consequence of inquiries made for Mrs. Senior, for the report to the Local Government Board, I regretfully saw that all that glittered was not gold. I now know several children taken from these schools, and it is evident that, to quote Mrs. Senior's words, "They want mothering."

The next letter I have is one of a dozen lines from Mr. George Moore, of Bow Churchyard, Kensington Palace Gardens, and Cumberland. After expressing his regret at his inability to be present owing to his going abroad, he says:—

'I have had considerable experience during the past ten years in my native county, Cumberland, and after a good deal of uphill work and most ignorant prejudice, which it has been necessary to contend against and overcome, I have succeeded in getting all the orphans in most of the unions boarded out: indeed I may say "all," as one or two of the smaller unions have no orphan children in their workhouses. Now it is my intention to see if it be possible to get all those children who are deserted boarded out.'

If other ladies and gentlemen would undertake for their respective unions what Mr. George Moore has undertaken for his county we should soon get the thing done. I have also received other letters—one from Miss Preüsser, containing practical suggestions for ladies or gentlemen proposing to assist in this work; another from Mrs. Archer, of Swindon; another from Colonel Grant, of Bath—that good man who has been working for many years at this and other poor-law matters. Among those who have taken the deepest interest in this question, besides Dr. Goodeve of Clifton, and Miss Smedley, I must allude to one who is no longer among us—a name to be mentioned with the deepest feelings of sorrow and respect—Lady Augusta Stanley. She was not only interested herself, but she deeply interested Her Majesty, which was a matter of no great difficulty; and I feel certain that if this work

is undertaken by the ladies of England, it will not want the highest support and the most powerful patronage. What is wanted is, not vast orphanages, with their costly buildings and establishments of officers of various descriptions and grades, but a return to God's ordinance of the family and home. There is gathered on this table the literature of the last ten years upon this subject for the use of the visitors who have honoured Lady Trevelyan and me with their presence. I would particularly commend to your notice the short collection of papers entitled 'The Comparative Cost of District Pauper Schools and Boarding Out,' and Miss Preüsser's Handbook.* We are anxious to smooth any difficulty that may be felt, and I would recommend anyone who wants advice about practical details to communicate with Miss Joanna Hill, of Hagley Road, Birmingham, or Miss Synnot, of Milton Bryan, Woburn, or my brother, the Rev. W. P. Trevelyan, of Calverton Rectory, Stony Stratford, and they will give the best advice. I hope that Mr. Greig, the Inspector of the Poor for Edinburgh, who is here from Scotland, will now give us the result of his experience.

Mr. GREIG said—I am very glad to be here to-day, but I did not know that I should be called upon to speak to you on the subject. I may say that we, in Scotland, until the question was raised in England, did not know that children here were dealt with in any other way than we deal with them. Now we know that there are other ways of dealing with the children besides ours; but whether these are better than ours remains to be seen. I think that ours is the best, and the measure of success which has attended our plan and operations, and especially the cheapness of our system, recommend it to our Scotch minds. It is only about thirty or forty years since that the system of Boarding-out, as at present adopted, was begun in a systematic manner; but it is quite true that it was carried out before that in another way—though not

* The list of the publications furnished to the visitors on this occasion will be found in the Appendix at page 48, with the names and addresses of the publishers.

like your 'farming-out' system which obtained in England. Before we board-out a child we send an officer to make inquiries. It is the business of this officer to visit the localities in which it is proposed to place children, and he has to inquire into the character and conduct of the persons with whom it is proposed to place them, whether there are good schools in the neighbourhood, whether the proposed guardians are of good moral character, and are persons who would take the children to church, and see to their religious training. The officer, too, has to visit the foster-parents with whom children are placed, he has to pay the parents, and to see that the children are properly cared for, and are at all times to be seen. Then we have a variety of little checks which guard the system. There is a schedule for the schoolmaster in which he reports the daily attendance at school of the child, and a column in which he states whether or not the child comes in a cleanly state, and another in which he says whether or not it learns its lessons. We also have checks by means of the tradesmen we employ—of the shoemaker, and the tailor—and thus there are every means of checking any bad treatment. Of course we do not suppose that the rate of allowance will give the child very high living, and we only look for it to get a sufficient quantity of good wholesome food. The allowance made is 3s. per week per child, the sum of £10 per annum per head including everything, even to superintendence and medical attendance. I have about 300 boarded-out children to superintend. I have been an officer of Edinburgh, and also of St. Cuthbert's, and had the same classes of children. They are orphan children, deserted children, and 'separated' children, this term being applied to those children who are taken when it is found that their kindred would train them up as 'street Arabs.' Sir Charles Trevelyan said that some persons feared that children would be deserted in greater numbers if boarding-out were adopted, and he combated this view. I noticed this objection in Mr. Tufnell's paper; but the people who desert their children prefer the 'palatial home' to the 'working

home,' and as we take care, in the case of deserted children, that the child is taken where the unnatural mother does not know, the result is very different from that which Mr. Tufnell throws out as an objection to boarding-out, and, in my experience, it acts in a very different manner to the way he says it will act. As a matter of fact we get fewer of the deserted and separated classes than we desire, because when the parents become chargeable, we are anxious that the children should be brought up to a future good life; and we wish to get them out at as early an age as possible, for the earlier the better, because, for one thing, the feelings of affection between the child and the foster-mother awaken quicker when the child is young than they can in after life. If the child is four or five years of age even, the chances are that the parental tie does not become so strong as it would have been if the child had been younger when it was transferred. When the children grow up we desire that the foster-parents should get them situations in their own locality. Sometimes we are under the necessity of finding them situations ourselves; for instance, if a boy wants a trade which is not carried on in the place where he is brought up, we take him to another town, but we find it better to have him placed near his foster-parents, for then his mother washes his clothes and looks after him. Our Committee of Managers go once a year to visit the foster-parents, and we find that the foster-children often visit their foster-parents, who now and again receive from those who are gone out a pound note, or a new shawl, and in one place we found that one of the sons of the foster-mother was about to marry the foster-girl whom the mother had brought up. 'Sometimes,' it is said, 'there is danger of ill-treatment.' I have never found that to any extent. The officers are watchful; but assuming this is to a certain extent correct, a child brought up to a little hardness in youth will feel less hardness in after life if he should meet difficulties. A gasfitter asked me to get him two boys to learn his trade. He had had two boys from George Heriot's Hospital—an endowed institution in Edinburgh for boys, where there are

many female and male servants, the latter in livery, so that the boys are waited upon by footmen. The gasfitter said that the two boys he had received from the institution could not get along at all, for they could not put up with correction by the foreman when they misbehaved; but the boys I sent him finished their time, and the master told me that he never had better boys, and that he was sure they would make prosperous men of the world. Then as to the condition of the children in regard to health. It must be remembered that we do not select the children. We take all the children who come to us—those who are healthy as well as those who are unhealthy. We have, of course, scrofulous children, and we try and send them to places which are better for them; but our death rate is very low indeed, notwithstanding that we take all children; and the fact of our children being from, in many instances, sources which are not good, heightens the value of the testimony in favour of boarding-out. I forget what our death rate is, but it is something very small, and is far below what Mr. Tufnell puts it. In the past year we have not had a death among the whole of our children. I can give you the particulars of a case which shows the feeling among the foster-mothers for the foster-children. A lady lost a little girl by death, and came to me to ask if I could assist her to obtain a foster-child to replace the one she had lost, as she thought she should then overcome her sorrow. I selected five or six that she might go and see—children who were boarded-out. I do not know how it was, but after she went the foster-mothers got jealous, and not one of them, even though they were entreated to give up a child, would let one go. On the Managers paying a visit once to a house, one said ‘This child will do;’ and the foster-mother, thinking they were going to take the child from her, got very excited, and both foster-parents said that they would keep the child, whether they were paid for it or whether they were not. We have had considerable disturbance when, after a ‘separated’ or deserted child has been boarded-out for some years, the parent has come and demanded the child, then

having become of age to be of use. I have represented the hardships inflicted by such claims to the Poor Law Board, and they agree that it is a state of things which ought to be remedied, and they have put into the Poor Law Bill now before Parliament a clause to the effect that a parent who leaves his or her child in the hands of the Poor Law for a certain period, shall not be able to reclaim it unless he or she repays the cost of its keep. In giving these few facts I do not know whether an English audience will consider them points of interest.

Sir CHARLES TREVELYAN replied—I speak the feeling of the meeting when I say that every point is of interest.

Colonel FREMANTLE asked—Have you not, Mr. Greig, great difficulty in getting homes for sick children—for strumous children, and such like?

Mr. GREIG—We have no such difficulty. For instance, we had a boy with hip disease, and the Managers, thinking that he was a trouble to the foster-mother, offered to take him back; but she would not part with him. We have double the demand for the children than we can supply.

Sir CHARLES TREVELYAN—My brother, the Rev. W. P. Trevelyan, has had experience in his parish of Calverton, in Buckinghamshire, but he prefers that the experiences of boarding-out there shall be spoken to by the Rev. Henry Wood, who is an independent witness.*

The Rev. HENRY WOOD said he had great pleasure in giving his testimony in reference to the boarding-out at Calverton, of which he had been a witness for the last two years. During that time, he said, he had had very great opportunities of witnessing the working of the system, not only in regard to the conduct of the children and their treatment by their foster-parents, but he had seen the advantages of it as regarded the children themselves, and the benefit the advent of town-bred children had been to the country children. He saw the children in their homes; he saw them at school, and he saw them

* Mr. Trevelyan's experiences are explained more at large in a Paper by himself printed at page 38.

at church; and he was thoroughly convinced of the satisfactory and successful character of the system there. The population at Calverton is only 300, and they have fourteen foster-children, or rather had, for one had gone to service. He read a letter from her to her foster-mother, and the affectionate expressions in the letter were quite remarkable; and the feelings of the foster-mother were equally warm towards the child. As expressed by Miss Smedley in her paper on 'Pauper Homes,' children are not like artificially hatched birds or fish, and 'cannot do without their nests.' Home life is necessary for the child, and this system supplies that natural life which comes from 'our Father which is in Heaven.' The first little company of parentless fledglings was brought down to be distributed into their various nests in July 1871. They were fourteen in number, being one boy and thirteen girls, all from the Union of St. George's, Hanover Square, and were escorted by two officers of the union. They were neatly dressed, not in uniform, and had been provided with all that was needed in the way of outfit. They were all lively at first, but as the process of dispersion proceeded the little faces became somewhat gloomy, and at last those remaining cried bitterly. This was perhaps from the first sense of loneliness, or of fear which the new life just dawning had not yet dispelled. But the gloom was soon over, and in every case, it being about dinner time, a good meal had been provided. The children gave the impression of having been well cared for; but nearly all were afflicted with ophthalmia, some very much so. They had a peculiar walk, too, with a cramped movement of the legs and feet suggestive of their necessarily cramped life, and the funny nod, accompanied by a little "hem!", in answer to anything said to them, all bespoke the inevitable effect of a mechanical treatment, by which neither the powers of the body nor the faculties of the mind and spirit can be duly developed. The worst cases of ophthalmia were at once attended to by a doctor. No specific remedy was used; but with attention to the general health, aided by the wholesome air of the country, the disease

gradually, and at length entirely, disappeared. There was no instance of its being communicated to other children. No doubt the actual distribution of the children was a trying matter for all the wisdom and discretion of those who had this duty to perform. It is much easier now when a fresh arrival takes place of one or two, and there is only one home to receive the new guest. In the disposal of the thirteen children no selection was made, except on the ground of age. The one guide was the wish of the foster-parents as to the age of those to be placed in their charge. Knowing so well as I know now all the parents and all the children, with the addition of those who have been since brought in, I marvel at the apparent suitability of the distribution and the successful issue; and I see in this fact a proof of the positive influence of personal and domestic associations, even in a cottage home, in rendering a stranger child so like one born in the house. The circumstances of the homes and of the families were, of course, various. There were, in one case, father and mother and three children already, to which one was added. There was the aged widow, with two grown-up daughters, in weak health, poor, but industrious and respectable; here two girls were placed, one of whom was a foundling only three years of age. That little one has been most kindly cared for, and has thriven well, though naturally delicate. All praise be given by us, though not uttered, for a work of true mercy done by the poorest. Then there was one of the oldest, a girl of ten years of age, given to a rather superior couple without children of their own. The wife had been formerly an excellent servant, and the result in that case is that the foster-child has been now for some months in a superior household in service, and is spoken of very well. A boy and girl, brother and sister, were taken by a staid and well-ordered couple where good laundrywork is done. The girl, being now fourteen, has been for some time employed wholly in the work, which is in fact a good trade learnt, and she is now receiving some small wages instead of being an expense to the Guardians. The boy is still at school and is one of the two most advanced

in the school. He takes cheerfully to the work of conveying the clothes backwards and forwards, thus assisting in the general business by his outdoor services. One girl went into a family where there were three children already; but the character of the foster-parents rendered the home peculiarly desirable. In that case it was found that special faults had to be watched over. The work has been done, and the child is progressing happily, and renders herself really useful. Next door to the brother and sister at the laundry is another little sister, a very general pet, and a pleasing child. Her foster-parents evidently take the greatest interest in her, having no child of their own. It may be remarked that the men, as foster-fathers, have quite entered into the work, and have shown careful thought and anxiety for the children's welfare. In this case the child may always be seen walking with her father, or with both parents, on Sundays. Since the first arrival in 1871 four more have been received, two boys and two girls. One died after a rapid illness, and one, who was scrofulous, was sent back to the union. Two are already off the hands of the Guardians. In Calverton Village no change has been required for any of the children originally placed—each child remains where it was first planted; and it is pleasant to see how they have become rooted. So far from being troublesome, they are regarded by those who are most under responsibility for them as a pleasant and useful additional element in both parish and school. The problem of compulsory attendance at school is, of course, secured in their case by positive requirement, and the influence of this upon others in the parish has been of much use. A neighbouring Clergyman, who had also taken up this work in his parish, said: 'It is one of the blessings that must arise out of this system that it brings the women of our working classes into an active self-denying work of this nature. Already, too, there is one instance in which it has suggested the similar placing out, irrespective of Poor Law intervention, of a child related to one of our children.' The speaker then proceeded

to say that the harvest, so far as his parish was concerned, after the first sowing four and a half years ago, was only now just beginning; but there were already the first fruits, and even if all the arrangements were annulled that day, and the little ones driven from their nests, there had been a work done for them, physically, mentally, and morally, which was worth more than the money and trouble it had cost, and which would, even at the worst, exercise a benign influence upon their future career. There could be no doubt of the sincerity of the foster-parents' feelings towards the children; and the children had the strong incentive to good conduct which the fear of grieving those we love brings to bear upon the life. It had been felt to be important that during the time the children were under the Boarding-out Committee none of the treatment should be of an eleemosynary character, and that freedom of action should, as much as possible, be accorded to the foster-parents, though we find them always prompt to seek advice about anything in which special action is required. The rule is, 'as much and as close supervision as possible, with the minimum of interference.' There is scope enough for any private 'pocket' kindness when the children, having gone to service, are no longer at the charge of the Board.

MR. TALLACK, of the Howard Society, speaking from his connection with the National Committee for Boarding-out Pauper Orphan Children, which is under the chairmanship of Mr. Francis Peek, said he could testify to the facts spoken of by Sir Charles Trevelyan and Mr. Greig, as to the preference which the pauper classes had for the aggregate school, and the dislike of pauper relatives to the children being brought up in the homes of the working classes. Thus, he said, the boarding-out did not supply such an incentive to persons to come on the rates, or to permit their children to do so, as was presented by the aggregate ('district') school system. The parents and friends of children in pauper schools could go and see the children, and these relatives were quite content that the ratepayers should support the children under these cir-

cumstances; but where deserted children had been boarded-out they had soon been claimed, for the friends soon found they were not in the district schools. Therefore, so far from boarding-out producing an increase of pauperism, it had the reverse effect. With regard to the District schools, the whole country was under a deep debt of obligation to Mr. Tufnell for having pressed for these schools, instead of having the children brought up in the workhouse; but was it not likely that the children brought up in these schools, with their splendid regimental bands, their 'beautiful domains,' and the other adjuncts to a large establishment, would feel dissatisfied with working life, for which, on the other hand, they might be fitted by a common sense home training. Very few middle-class people even had opportunities of educating their children in such fine places as these pauper schools, and the effect of having such schools for classes destined to an industrial life was very far from leading to industrial or moral results. In the Scotch towns which had the least boarding-out there was the greatest amount of immorality.

Miss FLORENCE HILL, who was introduced by Sir Charles Trevelyan as having given much attention to boarding-out, said the system has not been pursued long enough in England to be yet tested by results; for these we must look to Scotland, and in Mr. Skelton's book will be found ample record of its success. Assuming, then, that it is the best, as well as the most economical, method of training children deprived of their natural homes, we have to secure the means for carrying it into effect: first, respectable and kindly foster-parents, occupying healthy dwellings; and, second, efficient supervision, both voluntary and official. With regard to the former, it is encouraging to know that the plan, when established in a suitable neighbourhood, and conducted with reasonable caution and tact, needs only to be rightly understood by our respectable working classes to obtain offers of more homes than there are—at any rate—girls to put into them. Boys are not so easily placed out in England; but I believe in Scotland this difference does not exist, and we hope it will soon disappear here.

With the exception of a few scattered instances of indigenous growth under Mrs. Archer in Wiltshire, Miss Boucherett in Lincolnshire, Mr. Armitstead at Sandbach, and the Boards of Guardians at Leominster, Eton, &c., who may be regarded as our Pioneers, boarding-out began in this country in 1868. The children thus dealt with amount at the present time to about 2,700, but of these a considerable proportion are, I fear, only nominally boarded-out—that is, without due care in the selection of homes, and without proper supervision. Guessing roughly (for no data exist for accurate calculation) probably a thousand are well cared for. The rest are much in need of the kindly watchfulness which only volunteer workers can give, our Poor Law officials, however willing, being far too much occupied by other duties to spare the necessary time. The remaining orphans and deserted children now growing up in pauper schools may be estimated as amounting at least to 15,000. If these are to be transferred to happy home-life it is obvious that many helpers are wanted. Experience shows that the homes will be forthcoming if the effort be seriously made. Shall we lack the other element of success—committees to make the necessary arrangements with foster-parents, and to see that the conditions provided for the children's welfare are strictly observed? Few, I think, would refuse their help if they would, after spending some hours among the inmates of our pauper schools, pay a few visits to the more fortunate children in foster-homes; the different aspect of the two classes would touch them with irresistible power.

The work is not difficult, and, though it involves some trouble and anxiety, it brings a rich reward in the welldoing and happiness of the children. Large committees, such as that at Birmingham, require elaborate organisation; and the principal managers must devote a considerable amount of time and thought to the work. But small committees, in rural parishes, of two or three persons living near each other, and undertaking the care of perhaps two or three children, will find very little to be done which may not be accomplished in the

usual visits to the village school, and to humble neighbours. The more sparsely the children are scattered over the country the better, for they should nowhere be numerous enough to form a 'caste.' Mingled with the other children of the district they gradually lose all pauper characteristics, and become merged in the working population. It has been objected that neither are the dwellings of our working classes decent enough, nor the schools frequented by their offspring good enough, for our pauper children. If this were so, a heavy disgrace would rest upon all of us who have been content with such a state of things; but I hold that the homes and the education which produce our artisans and domestic servants, although capable of improvement, are fit for the reception of the humblest class of our people. It will, perhaps, surprise you to learn, that the danger specially to be guarded against is too much notice and petting of the children, not only by the committee, but by the foster-parents themselves. (Hear, hear.) Kindly honest parents having been chosen, they should be urged to treat their foster-children exactly as they would their own, and the children should be accustomed to regard them as real parents, sharing with them the duties and pleasures, and even the responsibilities and sorrows, of home, and looking to them for help and advice in their start in life. This is the course pursued in Scotland, which, with the addition of the voluntary supervision we have grafted upon the system, we shall do well to regard as our model.

The great benefit our cause has received from Ireland in the valuable papers on the Boarding-out System, read before the Statistical Society of that country by Dr. Ingram, makes it peculiarly appropriate that we should, on the present occasion, endeavour to return that obligation by drawing attention to the proposed alteration in the Irish Poor Law for which Dr. Ingram pleads. The principle of the system, so germane to a warm-hearted and affectionate people, seems to have existed in the sister island from very early times, for we find that in the reign of Edward II. it was enacted by the English invaders that no English child should be placed with Irish

foster-parents lest his attachment to them should become so powerful as to alienate him from his own race; a significant proof, by the way, of the strength of the affection which springs up in this relation, and of which those engaged at the present time in administering the system have daily proof. Boarding-out, however, by Poor Law Guardians, was adopted in Ireland only a few years ago, and as it was then simply regarded as a means of preserving the life of pauper infants—the mortality among whom in some workhouses had become perfectly appalling—they were to remain with their foster-parents only until infancy was passed. The age for their return to the workhouse was fixed, I think, at first, at three years; this was raised to five, and subsequently to ten, which is the present limit. The effect on the health of the children, wherever the homes have been carefully chosen, has been excellent; and other benefits attaching to the plan have likewise shown themselves. Meanwhile the growing feeling here in favour of boarding-out, both for its moral and physical advantages, strengthens the desire in Ireland to secure the same training for pauper children there. The cruelty of the present arrangement, for no milder word can be used, of removing children of ten years old from homes in which they have lived from infancy, tearing them up by the roots, as it were, and thrusting them back into the dreary routine of workhouse existence, after having accustomed them to the freedom and affection of family life, is exciting warm sympathy in their behalf; while the moral deterioration sure to follow such a change is beginning to be recognised as a serious national evil. In illustration of the present lamentable state of things, I will read a passage from a letter I received a few days since from my friend Miss Frances Power Cobbe, whose brother's estates are in County Dublin. She says, 'My brother (Charles Cobbe, of Newbridge) has some mountain property near Dublin, where a great many orphans are boarded-out among the small farms along the valley of Glensasmoil. The people are very kind to their foster-children. . . . The regulation, however, which stops the legal outdoor provision for the children at ten years old, is a fatal bar to the con-

tinuity of such connections, as well as to the moral education of the orphans. My brother has told me that the foster-mothers have several times come to him crying with grief at being obliged to send back the children to the workhouse, but quite unable out of their own poverty to support them during the two or three years before their labour would be equivalent to their food. It seems the most suicidal policy to give children all the affections and beneficial influences of family life during their infancy, and then to drag them back into the workhouse precisely at the age when they have the least power to resist, and must be most susceptible to its blight.'

The readers of Mrs. Fletcher's Autobiography will remember the touching episode which had so sad a termination in the death of her daughter Grace from typhus fever, caught, if I recollect aright, in her persistent, and eventually successful, efforts to save a little girl seven years old from the Edinburgh poor-house, after she had been at nurse from infancy—a similar regulation prevailing in Scotland, apparently, at that time, to that which it is now desired to abolish in Ireland. The child could not be detained by threat or bribe within the building, escaping again and again. Once, though actually sick with typhus fever, she made her way in the midst of a stormy night to her nurse's door and begged to be admitted. Before Grace Fletcher herself sank a victim to that malignant disease she had the happiness of knowing that the child was restored to the home she loved so dearly.

In 1841, Mr. Smith, the late Governor of Edinburgh Gaol, struck by the large proportion of persons among the prisoners who had grown up in the poorhouse, drew the attention of Mr. Frederic Hill, Inspector of Prisons, to the fact. He at once communicated with the Managers of the poorhouse, who instituted an inquiry, the result being that the children's department was closed, and the children were boarded-out. 'This,' said Mr. Smith, in a letter to the *Scotsman* of March 1875, 'was the origin of the boarding-out* of pauper

* That is, of *systematic* boarding-out under proper safeguards. See Mr. Greig, at page 14-15.

children, which has been so successful in Edinburgh and elsewhere.' As the children grew up, he adds, 'they were absorbed in the rural population around them, and, as I was at pains to ascertain, ceased to be committed to prison or to fall into crime.'

I have mentioned that it is proposed to obtain an extension of the period during which pauper children in Ireland may be boarded-out. Mr. O'Shaughnessy will introduce a Bill which it was originally intended should raise the age to sixteen, the same fixed by the law in this country; but it has since, I regret to hear, been found necessary to reduce the limit to thirteen, an age at which, certainly, some children are not able to earn their own living, so that these will still have to be returned to the workhouse on quitting their foster-homes. I believe the Bill will be brought in on July the 5th; I earnestly hope it will obtain the support necessary to secure its passing this session, and trust that future legislation will extend the limit to sixteen years. I cannot, I am sure, better close these remarks than by quoting a letter from Lady Augusta Stanley, who took as deep an interest in the question how best to train our pauper children as she did in every subject affecting the welfare of her country. Writing to Miss Preüsser to acknowledge a communication relating to boarding-out which had been laid before the Queen, Lady Augusta Stanley said:— 'The Queen's Lady-in-waiting submitted the letter and prospectus to Her Majesty and was directed to acknowledge both, and to express the Queen's great interest in the class for whose benefit you are so zealously working, and in all the schemes for their benefit and improvement; and Her Majesty's sincere good wishes for the success of all such benevolent efforts.'

Colonel FREMANTLE was invited by Sir Charles Trevelyan to speak as to the arrangements made by the Guardians of St. George's, Hanover Square, for boarding-out, and the Colonel said that he was Chairman of the School Committee and had taken a deep interest in the subject. With regard to what Mr. Tallack had said as to mothers and other relatives

who had deserted children visiting the children who were in the district schools, such a thing, the Colonel said, was strictly contrary to order; and it would be most unfortunate, indeed, if it were to go forth that a person deserting a child could visit it. With regard to boarding-out there were many difficulties in the way of its general adoption, but, whatever difficulties there were, these would be overcome if the system was gradually worked out; but the system would result in disorder if tried on an enormous scale at once, and he trusted that too much enthusiasm would not be evoked. To any lady who undertook the task of watching over the children, as ladies' committees were doing, it would be a great good, by enlisting her in a most interesting work. But, at the same time, it was necessary to say that it was a work of responsibility, for any lady who took the charge of watching over the children would have to keep accounts, and no one should take it up with an idea of making a plaything of it for a time and then dropping it. It was necessary, too, that those who undertook the work should not remain for long periods abroad, for if the work were not done according to a well sustained system it would necessarily break down. He was decidedly against boarding-out deserted children, or, indeed, any except orphan children. The idea of the St. George's Guardians is to hand the orphan children over to foster-parents who will consider them as their own children, and nothing can be more horrible, in regard to boarding-out deserted children, than to take from the foster-parents a child which had been boarded out some three or four years, and hand it over to some one living in the lowest dens of St. Giles's or Westminster, who was found to be the mother. The Guardians cannot help themselves in such a case, but have to drag the child from the foster-parents. The Rev. Mr. Trevelyan knew that such a case had occurred, and that the parting was not only most distressing to the foster-parents and child, but that it did a great deal of harm in deterring people from taking the children, for in all cases where the parents of deserted children were found the children had to be returned.

Sir CHARLES TREVELYAN—The same thing occurs when the deserted children happen to be in the district school.

Colonel FREMANTLE—Yes; but when children are taken out of a pauper school there is not the same feeling evoked as when the child is taken out of a family in a village, for the people think that when a child is given to them to be boarded they should regard it as their own.* The great difficulty we have is to get ladies in the country who will take the necessary trouble to assist us in the work of boarding-out orphan children. I should not like them to think that it is not troublesome; but that fact will not stand in the way of those who desire to do good to orphan children, and the greatest help would be given us by ladies who have zeal and discretion undertaking this duty of watching over the children for the Guardians.

The Rev. W. P. TREVELYAN said what was wanted was to get people who did not *talk* of charity so much as *acted* it. He did not desire to put the value of boarding-out on a commercial basis—though even taking it on that point its results were great—so much as upon its value to those who were more immediately concerned—the children themselves and their foster-parents. He had seen the warmest affections awakened on both sides, to the immediate good of both.† The

* This proves the superiority of cottage homes over pauper schools in drawing out the affections. Only those deserted children should be boarded out who are not likely to be reclaimed; and as parents who desert their children calculate upon getting them again when their labour becomes valuable, after they have been brought up at the public expense, repayment of the cost of their maintenance ought to be an indispensable condition of their being given back. See the notice of the memorials of the Birmingham and Clifton Boards of Guardians to the Local Government Board at page 34. Of 803 boys discharged in the years 1872–3–4 from the Middlesex Industrial School at Feltham, 165 were again claimed by their friends, ‘who determinately refused all offers of provision,’ and of these more than eighteen per cent. relapsed into crime. Our arrangements are at present so framed that much the cheapest and best way open to our working class of educating and providing for their children is simply to turn them into the streets in a dirty, ragged, half-fed state. See extract from a letter in the Appendix, p. 49.

† The individual management of children’s tempers by a mixture of kindness and firmness, becomes possible in cottage homes. See the instances alluded to in Mr. Trevelyan’s Paper at page 38, and the following letter from a lady:—‘One

wives of working men, especially those who had no children of their own, were really doing the work with pleasure to themselves and advantage to the children. In a case present to his mind, while the wife had undertaken the domestic instruction of an orphan girl, the husband taught the orphan boy garden work. The children were certainly the means of influencing the moral and spiritual welfare of their foster-parents. In the parish of Calverton the boarding-out work was really a bright spot in the place, and anyone who came and saw it would consider that it was there a complete success. To the ladies who would undertake to assist in the good work it would be a pleasure through life, for the result of their work would be seen in the happy lives of some fellow human beings who might otherwise have been thrown helpless upon the world.

Sir CHARLES TREVELYAN announced that two ladies from Birmingham, the honorary secretaries of the Boarding-out Committee, were present, and would give their views, and Miss Joanna Hill would first address the meeting.

Miss JOANNA HILL said—I represent the largest existing Committee, and we have under us deserted children as well as orphans. I should state that though two of our honorary secretaries are in this room we have not neglected our duty in coming here, for we have left a third at home to do the work. (A laugh.) We began our boarding-out in

of the foster-mothers here told me she was worrying herself lest one of her boys was not quite straight. I had seen him out and was sure there was not much the matter, and laughed at her as a mother with one chick. However, yesterday we called unexpectedly and undressed him to examine his back. No child in Belgravia could have been cleaner and nicer. I asked about his temper, as he did not come with a very good character. “Well, he *has* a temper and a way and will of his own—that’s a *sure* thing. One day he wouldn’t take off his boots when I told him, so I said he should go to bed without his tea; and he wouldn’t give in, so I put him to bed. But dear me, one couldn’t keep a little motherless thing without food, so, to keep my word, I asked Father to take it him. But he wouldn’t take it from him. He *has* a will of his own; but Father put it by him, and when I went to bed, bless the poor child, he had eaten every crumb and was fast asleep; and so then I was easy. I like a child that has a spirit—and then, he is *so affectionate*.” I thought you would like this proof how soon the real motherly instinct is lighted up by these poor waifs.’

Birmingham by placing three girls in families in 1868 and 1869 as an experiment, receiving out-relief for them and supplementing it, to the necessary amount, by private charity. One of these girls, who was received into her home from one of the lowest courts of the town, dirty and neglected, at nearly nine years of age, unable even to tell her letters, is now an articulated pupil teacher in a National School; the second, who had been under the charge, for about two years after the death of her parents, of a bargeman's wife, notable as a hard drinker and bold fighter, is now, at fifteen, under-housemaid in a gentleman's family, and doing very well; the third, the daughter of a very low woman, died at the age of seventeen, of inherited and hopeless disease, bearing her extreme suffering with the utmost patience and resignation. In July 1870 the Birmingham Board of Guardians adopted the system, and a preliminary conference with the Ladies' Committee having been held to make arrangements, the first seven children were taken out of the workhouse and placed in homes in Birmingham parish on November 17th, eight days before the publication of the boarding-out order of the Poor Law Board. Finding it necessary to extend their operations, in order to provide for the whole number of children available for the boarding-out system in Birmingham workhouse—the largest in the kingdom with the exception of that of Liverpool—the Ladies' Committee certified itself under the Poor Law order, and placed children in several towns and villages at a distance of twenty miles from Birmingham, the lady superintendents there being all, of course, members of the Committee, and regularly transmitting quarterly reports to the honorary secretaries, who forward them to the Board of Guardians. It has also been deemed desirable that the duty of visiting the home, and certifying each application before it is transmitted to the Guardians, should be performed (until last November, when a Sub-committee was constituted for the purpose) by the honorary secretaries alone. These ladies have thus generally each to make a visit to one of our outlying stations about once a year, which also gives them an opportunity of advising

upon any little difficulty which may arise in the management of the children already placed in these localities. The Committee have taken ninety-eight children from the workhouse, and arrangements have been made for a brother and sister to be forwarded to their homes, where they will be placed together next week, and there are three boys now remaining, who are available for boarding-out, for whom we expect shortly to find homes. At this moment we could place out at least twelve or thirteen girls, if we had them, with persons of excellent character, who, in some cases, have been waiting eight or nine months. Indeed, we are quite surprised at the earnestness which the foster-parents show in their desire to have children, as we feel assured the amount paid with them can in no case afford any profit, the main motive for the application being the hope of happiness to be derived from the care of the children, and the pity which their desolate condition excites. One of the foster-parents, having received only a vague direction, on coming to make application to my house, searched for it up and down the road, asking first—as she phrased it—‘the gentlemen at the cabstand,’ and next ‘a gentleman with a basket of clothes on his head,’ if they knew where I lived. Her little foster-son has now been there three and a half years with her, and we have only to complain that she falls into the common habit of spoiling him. Our experience, in common with that of Scotland, tends to prove that relatives perfectly well able to support the younger members of their family, brothers and sisters, or nephews and nieces, yet are willing to throw the support of these children on the poor-rates so long as they are kept in the workhouse, and can be claimed as soon as they are old enough to be made into little domestic drudges. So soon, however, as the relatives recognise the fact that boarding-out severs the connection between them and the children, they relieve the rates of their support. Four children were taken out of the workhouse last year under these conditions, and the Master’s Clerk, remarking upon the fact to me, said, ‘Why, ma’am, you are diminishing the number in the workhouse.’

One painful fact has been forcibly brought forward during

the course of the eight years we have been at work, relative to the deserted children and the children of criminals, namely, that when their parents are found, it is the duty of the Guardians to return the child into their charge. These persons are sometimes well known to have treated them most cruelly. A case of the kind occurred in Birmingham, where a father, running away from his home, left his four children, all under seven years of age, alone with their mother's corpse. This man was found, prosecuted for his desertion, and sentenced to imprisonment. His children, torn from their foster-homes, had to be delivered up to him at the gaol door on his release. In sixteen months afterwards two of those children died from disease induced by his neglect, while the third happily rescued from him when she had only been a few weeks with her wretched father, and boarded-out by private charity, is now living happily and well cared for. In January of last year our Committee forwarded a memorial to the Local Government Board endorsed by a resolution from our Board of Guardians and from the Clifton Board, praying, in the spirit of the Industrial Schools' Act, 'that further legislation should be obtained authorising Boards of Guardians, either with or without the sanction of Justices of the Peace, to retain for a defined period of time the complete control over children whose parents have been convicted for deserting them, and to recover from the parents the cost of maintaining such children.'

If what we have urged so often and so earnestly be true, namely, the necessity of avoiding the contaminating influences inevitable in pauper schools, we must expect to find that the first boarded-out children whom we send out to gain their living, but who had before formed part of the accumulation in workhouse schools, will not be so successful as those whom we shall be able to save from such association in the future. Five girls boarded-out from Birmingham workhouse, who in the past year have attained the age of thirteen, and have begun to earn their own living, are at present all doing well, although during the time we have had them in our charge we have not

been without grave anxiety concerning three of them, while we have had to relinquish the charge of four other children—all of whom had passed some time previously in the workhouse, whose conduct has been so troublesome as to force the foster-parents to give them up. These cases, however, form but a very small proportion among ninety-eight children drawn from the worst classes of the inhabitants of the town, while we have, on the other hand, very many instances which we could relate of children whose residence in the foster-home has been a source only of unmixed happiness.

Miss MATHEWS, the other Honorary Secretary, who is specially charged with the accounts, then said:—We feel that our work in Birmingham has been greatly assisted by the friendly relations existing between ourselves and the Guardians. From the time that the first children were entrusted to our care the confidence of the Guardians in us has been gradually increasing, and they have shown every desire to help and support us, not only as members of the Board, but many of them also as private individuals, to whom we have felt able to apply for advice in cases of difficulty. The Board keeps us up to our work in all its details as regards reports, receipts, etc., which have to be sent in at stated times, and if anything occurs which requires explanation, or which shows any omission on our part, our attention is at once directed to it. I need not say that this is a great help to us in doing the work thoroughly. Our friendly relations have been greatly strengthened by a meeting which we have with the Guardians twice a year, at which nine or ten of our Committee are generally present. On these occasions the last quarter's reports upon the children are read over, and thus each case comes under notice, and is commented upon, and opportunity given for any difficulties which may arise being discussed and explained. The visiting Guardians once found one of our children in a Day Nursery, where they considered she ought not to be, and they were very nearly ordering her at once to be sent back to the workhouse. The matter was, however, deferred for a few days until our meeting, when the explanations given were

such that the Guardians expressed themselves entirely satisfied. The child is still in the home, where she has lived five and a half years, and a better home for her peculiar case could not possibly be found. In addition to these half-yearly meetings, we can at any time ask permission to attend the fortnightly meetings of the committee of the Guardians at the workhouse, in order to lay any urgent case before them.

Last month we had our first meeting with the third Board of Guardians with whom we have been connected since we began, and we have every reason to believe that we shall work with them as pleasantly as with their predecessors. We receive our money from the pay clerk every week with the utmost regularity, and are then in a position to pay it out fortnightly, monthly, or quarterly, as may be most convenient to each foster-parent, that is 3s. per week, and 6s. 6*d.* or 10s. per quarter for clothing, according to age. School fees, stationery, etc. are paid direct to each school, and a receipt obtained from each master or mistress, with a report upon the appearance and progress of the child. All necessary medical expenses, and extra nourishment in case of illness, we are empowered to grant upon a doctor's certificate of its necessity; and travelling expenses of children to their homes. The money for these two last items is repaid to me, and I give a receipt for it myself. We have considered 3s. to be a sufficient allowance for board, and I believe, by not offering a larger sum, we obtain a better class of foster-parents among those who are sufficiently removed, both by disposition and circumstances, above the temptation of gaining a few pence per week out of the allowance. In one case only of our ninety-seven children have we ever supplemented the allowance; that was the case of a widow in delicate health who took two sisters, and whom we helped for a time with clothing. The Committee has found it an advantage to be in possession of one or two iron bedsteads and bedding, to be lent out when required. The loan will sometimes enable a woman to take in two children instead of one, and thus keep sisters or brothers together.

Our average expenditure per child has never yet exceeded

4s. per week. Of the seven children who have reached the age of 13, three have been placed in service by the Committee, three provided for, or placed out, by their foster-parents, and a boy is just going to live with an aunt to start in work. Of two sisters with whom we have had great success, A. M., when taken from the workhouse, was found to be in a very weak state, and sometimes suffering from decided attacks of insanity. The foster-parents were in despair, but when the doctor told them that if the child went back she would in all probability become an idiot, and the only chance for her lay in their home, they promised to keep her twelve months and see what could be done. At the end of that time there was a decided improvement, which encouraged the parents still to keep her. They nursed her most tenderly through rheumatic fever, since which illness her health has improved; and a new mistress at the school she attends has no idea from her present state that she was ever considered mentally deficient. Her eldest sister we placed out four years ago, at eight years old, but at the end of six weeks she was returned to the workhouse for pilfering, lying, and general insubordination. She was again placed out, but was found unmanageable, being subject to fits of passion, which we believe were traceable to a taint of insanity. She was transferred to another home, but soon ran away from that, and was brought back a second time to the workhouse. We feared her case was hopeless, but on our receiving a very urgent application for a girl, and having no other girl to offer, the people, knowing all the circumstances, promised to give her a trial. She has now been with them eighteen months, and not one word have we heard against her either at home or at school. On the contrary, she is quite a favourite, and the principal dressmaker in the small town where she lives has asked to be allowed to teach her the business. She has been working there on half-time for several months, and as a mark of approbation has just received a velvet jacket and tablier, to the great delight of her foster-mother.

Mr. GREIG, in answer to some questions, read a clause in a Scotch Bill, which it was hoped would be passed in this

session, empowering the Guardians to keep deserted children after they had been under the Poor Law for a certain time, unless the parents paid the cost which had been entailed by the child's keep. This would prevent children from being torn from the foster-homes when they attained to years of usefulness. At present there were no rules of the sort, but notwithstanding that, if he found a child in the 'house' whose mother was likely to turn up soon he did not send it to be boarded-out; otherwise a fully deserted child was always boarded-out. There was a rule in Scotland that the friends of persons in the workhouse might visit them once a week, and a woman, who had thus come in as a visitor, had actually seen her own deserted child there without claiming him. He had known other children reclaimed directly after they had been sent from the workhouse to the country to be boarded-out—the parents evidently preferring to know where their children were—so that boarding-out acted as a deterrent to desertion.

The Rev. J. R. SIMPSON warmly thanked Sir Charles Trevelyan on behalf of all present for the opportunity he had given them of listening to the interesting statements which had been made.

The company then separated.

By the Rev. W. P. Trevelyan, Rector of Calverton, near Stony Stratford, on the 'Practical Experience of Boarding-Out':—

'On July 27, 1871, I went with a cart of Mr. Syratts' and our own carriage to receive thirteen children—twelve girls and one boy—from the officers of St. George's (Hanover Square) Union, who had come as their escort to our station, Wolverton.

'I received them from these two officials very well dressed—not in any uniform, but neatly and with all that was needed in the way of "outfit." They were all very "jolly." This

lasted until I began to deposit the children in their new homes. At St. Mary's I left six—two in each house.

‘As, however, the process of dispersion proceeded, the little faces became very gloomy, and at last the small remaining lot cried lustily. This did not, however, last long. It was about one o'clock, and good dinners had been prepared in each case.

‘I should mention the condition of the children. They gave me the impression of having been well cared for in the union schools from which they had come. The one drawback was their eyes. Some were much affected by the ophthalmia—nearly all in some degree. The children's legs, too, gave the idea of a cramped life; the way they moved them—a peculiar walk. And when they were spoken to they answered by a funny nod of the head and a little “hem!”

‘Those who were the worst had their eyes seen to by the doctor; no specific remedy was used. The disease disappeared by degrees, under the influence of the changed condition of life, until it entirely disappeared. No instance occurred of its being communicated to other children.

‘No selection was made, except on the ground of “age,” in the disposal of the children to the different foster-parents—with one exception—Charlotte Hope, a foundling of three years old, for whom a very suitable home existed. We tried in the other cases to let the children be allotted so as to suit, as far as possible, the wishes of the foster-parents as to the ages they preferred.

‘I will here say how the thing came about. I had seen the boarding-out plan at work on a small scale in our own local union; and having previously to this been taken with the idea through an association set on foot by the Miss Hills, now so well known for the useful work they are doing, I proposed to three or four of our women that they should try the plan; but when we came to the point all the children had been taken out. Two, however, had gone to a man and his wife at Old Wolverton, whom I knew very well, and I saw the thing working so satisfactorily in their case, that I felt more than ever the importance of getting it practically on foot.

‘ We therefore agreed to enter into negotiations with St. Matthew’s Union, Bethnal Green, of which I heard through my brother (Sir Charles Trevelyan), and all our arrangements seemed to have been fully settled with them; but a new Board was elected who would not fulfil the conditions of payment which their predecessors had made, so this fell through. But happily the subject came before the St. George’s (Hanover Square) Guardians, and they determined to make the experiment.

‘ The regulations on which our arrangements were based were those which had been issued by the Local Government Board, and very good they are. I should mention by the way that they are published in the form of a pamphlet by Mr. Garnett, Publisher, at Windermere, having been collected by Miss Preüsser.

‘ The terms were 4s. per week for board, 10s. per quarter for clothing after the first quarter; and in addition to this the schooling and dispensary payments were allowed. The total cost is something under 5s. per week.

‘ These terms have remained throughout. They are liberal, but not more so than is needed for the sure well-working of the system. We pay monthly and with great exactness. The account is sent at once to the Board and a cheque reaches us in a few days in payment of the amount. I have never felt that any undue stress was laid by the foster-parents on the matter as a money advantage to themselves.

‘ The way in which the foster-parents threw themselves into the work was more than could have been expected. I was especially satisfied when one of our women said to me, before she had made up her mind to take a child, that she could not do so unless she could consider her house that child’s home for all its after life, in the intervals between places of “service,” should such occur, and for the usual holidays given to servants. This woman has since shown herself very valuable as a foster-parent.

‘ The circumstances of this quite small parish (barely 300) favoured the success of the plan, although, until we had really

tried it, I had not been led to consider that its conditions were exceptionally favourable.

‘The men, where there have been also foster-fathers, have fully entered into the spirit of it, and shown just the same thoughtful care and anxiety for the children’s welfare in all ways as the foster-mothers. In one case, especially, the little girl may always be seen walking with its father on a Sunday.

‘We have since received from St. George’s Union Schools four more children, two girls and two boys. The present position as to numbers is fourteen. One little girl died after a rapid illness, one was returned to the union, as a scrofulous complaint would in all likelihood unfit her ultimately for service, and one has gone into service in a gentleman’s family and is doing well. She has been away about four months. Her age is about fourteen and a half.

‘Another girl is fitted to go into a laundry, and is now taken off the cost of the union.

‘In Calverton itself no change has taken place. Each child is where it was originally planted, and it is most satisfactory to see how they have become rooted. They are certainly very much liked; in fact they are a very pleasant addition to the parish and the school. The regularity with which they are obliged to attend has a very useful influence upon the school.

‘But changes have occurred, although not in Calverton itself. The effect of this I at first feared very much; but those to whom I appealed in the difficulty, and who accepted the responsibility, have done so well that what I at first feared would prove a serious difficulty, has given me more confidence than ever in the system. It has shown that the class on whom we lean for foster-parents have the will and the power of becoming most valuable workers in what I am sure is the most telling effort for good which has been adopted by God’s blessing for years. None could live with the thing working under their eyes, as we have been doing for more than four and a half years, without coming to this conclusion and craving for its spread throughout the country.

‘ One of the blessings that would arise from its general adoption would be the bringing the women of our working classes into work of this nature. The effect on a country parish is, I am sure, very useful, and suggests the idea of carrying out the same plan, more or less, with children connected with themselves, but who are unhappily placed.

‘ I say this because I cannot doubt the sincerity of our foster-parents’ feelings towards our children, and that they are supplying the place of parents in a way I could not have dreamt of had not I seen the thing as I have seen it. The foster-parents are thus supplying that strong incentive to good conduct which the fear of hurting those we love brings to bear upon the life.

‘ I saw the foster-mother’s strong and earnest anxiety and thought about the girl who has gone to service, the pleasure with which she worked at her “outfit,” and how ungrudging she was in supplying it; whereas at the time she did not know that the Board would repay any portion. The foster-mother is not a person who would spend anything without thought, and she and her husband are not beyond the ordinary position of a labouring couple; the latter is now unable to work.

‘ The little girl, in her letters, has unfolded all her mind as fully as ever a child could do to its own mother, and the danger was lest the girl should be unsettled by over, and possibly mistaken, tenderness—lest the foster-mother should thus discourage the child in bearing the little difficulties which must always more or less attend service.

‘ I should also add that I found quite incidentally that the girl had a savings bank account amounting to 26*s.* placed there before she went into service.

‘ One of the two girls from our own local union left for a “small place” in Stony Stratford, a mile from Old Wolverton. Her foster-mother was as much watching over her during this time as when she was under her direct care. She went to a place with a tradesman at Wolverton Station and is now a nursery girl in a clergyman’s family in Sussex.

‘ But what is especially deserving of notice is this: that an

interval did exist between this last and the previous situation, and that this was spent at the foster-parents' (agricultural labourer class, without a family) without any payment whatever being made.

'It must be about seven years or more since this girl went to Old Wolverton with another girl who is still there. This latter has an unusually difficult temper; but the steady and firm, kind, and judicious way in which the child is managed will, by God's blessing, by-and-by overcome it.

'I name this instance to show that you can, under the boarding-out system, bring a special agency to bear upon those difficult cases of temper which (judging from Mrs. Nassau Senior's and other statements) lead to the young servants who go direct to their places from the union schools being again returned to the union, if not to their being thrown adrift upon the world.

'It is important that during the time the children are under the Boarding-out Committee the whole subject should be treated as "business," i.e. that it should not partake of the eleemosynary character; and as much as possible the responsibility should be left to the foster-parents: not that the supervision should be less anxiously maintained—on the contrary it should be "Argus-eyed"—but that it should still give scope to the foster-parents to be the *parents in action* as far as possible.

'When the children have once gone into service—the Union having conscientiously fulfilled its duty (as St. George's is certainly doing) in the meantime—there may arise occasions for the exercise of some private "pocket" kindness in case of illness etc.

'A most important work falls to the Committee in the selection of "places." Happily for the boarding-out system, if not for the convenience of employers, good situations are now to be got without difficulty; but it is a point that our employing classes might think of, that by this system a valuable addition to female recruits for domestic service may be made both in *quantity* and *quality*.

‘I have written hurriedly down the points that are in my mind on this subject—one of great interest to me, and which, I am sure, would stir people’s minds to carry it out generally, if only they could see with what little trouble and self-denial so great an end, both for this world and the next, can be effected. During the four years and eight months our interest in it has increased, and our pleasure in seeing the children grafted into the “family” system in this parish is very decided. I am sure that in all I have said each member of our Committee and our parish generally would fully agree; and, except to go into the world when the time comes, as industrious good servants, it would be a great distress to lose the happy faces which have become a part and parcel of the parish.

‘W. P. TREVELYAN.

‘CALVERTON RECTORY, STONY STRATFORD.’

The following letter, addressed by the Rev. E. J. Edwards, Incumbent of Trentham, to a lady of his acquaintance, contains an interesting view of the influences of the boarding-out system:—

‘My dear Mrs. —, You ask me how you could help us in this cause—the boarding-out of pauper orphans from the Union workhouse; or, indeed, before they have entered it.

‘I will suppose you to have read and appreciated the pamphlets which I enclose—Miss Preüsser’s “Boarding-out of Pauper Children” (in its fifth edition, you will notice), and “The Comparative Cost of District Pauper Schools and Boarding-out.”

‘The two points of information which I would ask you to obtain are, (1) the number of pauper orphans in the — Union workhouse at the present time; and (2) the facilities for boarding-out the orphan boy or girl in the home of a foster-parent in any country parish within the Union district.

‘I wish to confine myself to the case of the child who has lost both father and mother; for all will agree that such, at

least, before all other cases of destitution committed to our charge, call upon us to surround them with the personal kindness and watching which the friendly oversight of *all* ranks in many a well ordered country parish will be able to supply.*

‘Now, let it never be forgotten, that (as experience has already shown) the parish that furnishes a real home to the orphan will find something of the reward which follows “the entertaining of the angel unawares,” in the wholesome gentle influence which the solitary condition of the orphan child exercises upon schoolfellows and older neighbours, over and above the deeper attachment awakened under the foster-parents’ roof itself.

‘I write as a clergyman of a country parish; but do not you think that all parties—officers of the Union, the orphan, and the villagers—would all be gainers by the local sympathies associated in the child’s behalf? Thus: suppose the duties of the Guardians of the Union to be generally supplemented by the voluntary aid of outdoor Lady-Guardians (acting carefully on the suggestions of the Poor Law Board, 1870), surely the character of the workhouse itself would be raised in the eyes of the people around by such co-operation. It would be recognised as an institution which, though severe in its rules and supported by rates, nevertheless had attracted to itself no small share of the kindly influence that friends and neighbours outside could give it. Might I add, in writing to yourself, that such co-operation of orphan-helpers, *official and unofficial*, would tend to *unvulgarise* the Union, and to soften off some of those harsh lines of demarcation between rich and poor which the sight of the Union walls suggests. We never open a new vein of Christian enterprise without finding that it leads unexpectedly to results higher and better than we had ourselves in view.

* It may seem superfluous to enlarge upon the claims of the unshielded orphan; and yet, what can tell such a tale as the following, from the last Report of the Church Penitentiary Association, 1875-6, page 9:—‘It is reported from the Devon House of Mercy that, out of 73 penitents who left during the year, 29 had been admitted under 16 years, and 66 were orphans (fatherless, 33; motherless 10; lost both parents, 23; having both parents, 7).’

‘ Depend upon it, this is a field of woman’s work at home, which sooner or later will be fully understood amongst ourselves, and be ably and heartily administered. Every head of a family and household, large or small, feels, if he does not confess, how the little children of the house have the knack of making all, within and without the parlour, friends ; and it will be but the enlargement of this our home and family experience, when we see (as we shall see) the orphans of a Union not regarded as a burden, but as a bond of common interest in the Union district, and their protection and training a privilege which blends all that is best and most worth having in the society around, in finding them a home in childhood and a share of those blessed associations which go so far to the building up of sound principles and steady industry in after life. Then, and not till then, will the *Union* justify its own right to that name.

‘ Now will you, as a resident within the circuit of the — Union, ask for a share in this outdoor lady-guardianship of the pauper orphans ? ’

The same gentleman wrote as follows to a friend, heading it ‘ A Dream of Boarding-Out ’:—

‘ I certainly think the root-thought about these pauper orphans should be the unbrutalising, unvulgarising of the Union—the un-unionising the “ Union ”—by making it a Union, if rate-supported, why much more heart-supported, and so a Union indeed. Just as the “ State ” in its degree lowers the ideal of the “ Church ” (not that I want to separate them) by its cut and dried way of asserting parochial rights and so forth, so the “ Union ” chills, numbs, unbeautifies the work of charity. We have to restore the bloom which the rates brush off ; and, of course, as all tenderness and delicacy finds its truest development in the English gentlewoman, she, pre-eminently she, is to be the bond that is to knit hearts together outside and inside the Union, and her work *begins*

with taking the oversight of this pauper orphan. Having won a home for it, and created a confidence in all parties in this her outdoor guardianship, the value of her *indoor* services will be appreciated by the Union, as well as of a nurse in an hospital; and the Union district will ultimately find, to its own great surprise and contentment, that the charge of all, except the incorrigible vagabonds, instead of being hard and dry, will prove a main source of kindly, gentle influence, drawing together and strengthening all who take part in *homing* the destitute.'

APPENDIX No. 1.

BOOKS AND REPORTS

ON

BOARDING-OUT PAUPER CHILDREN.

THE BOARDING-OUT OF PAUPER CHILDREN IN SCOTLAND. By JOHN SKELTON, Advocate, Secretary of the Poor-Law Board in Scotland. With an Introduction on Pauperism. William Blackwood & Sons, Edinburgh and London. Price 3s. 6d.

ADDITIONAL FACTS AND ARGUMENTS ON THE BOARDING-OUT OF PAUPER CHILDREN: being a Paper read before the Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland, on Tuesday, January 18, 1876. By JOHN R. INGRAM, LL.D., one of the Vice-Presidents of the Society. Dublin: Edward Ponsonby, 116 Grafton Street.

BOARDING-OUT AND PAUPER SCHOOLS, ESPECIALLY FOR GIRLS: being a Reprint of the Principal Reports on Pauper Education in the Blue Book for 1873-4. Edited, with an Introduction and Notes, by MENELLA B. SMEDLEY, one of Mrs. Senior's Staff. Henry S. King & Co., 65 Cornhill, and 12 Paternoster Row.

BOARDING-OUT PAUPER CHILDREN: a Reprint of the Memorial of Ladies, and subsequent Orders, Observations, and Forms issued by the Poor-Law Board; to which is appended SUGGESTIONS BY A LADY, forming Complete Instructions for Carrying out the System. London: Simpkin, Marshall, and Co.; Windermere: J. Garnett. Price 6d.

THE THREE LAST ANNUAL REPORTS OF THE WINDERMERE AND TROUTBECK BOARDING-OUT COMMITTEE. Windermere: J. Garnett.

THIRD ANNUAL REPORT OF THE CERTIFIED VOLUNTARY BOARDING-OUT COMMITTEE FOR BIRMINGHAM PARISH. *Journal* Printing Offices, New Street, Birmingham.

THE BOARDING-OUT SYSTEM DISTINGUISHED FROM BABY FARMING AND PARISH APPRENTICESHIP: a Paper read before the National Association for the Promotion of School Science, at Bristol, October 5, 1869, by FLORENCE HILL. Bristol: Isaac Arrowsmith, Quay Street.

THE COMPARATIVE COST OF DISTRICT PAUPER SCHOOLS AND BOARDING-OUT: being a Reprint from the *Spectator* for March 4, 1876; to which are added Information concerning Boarding-Out at Calverton, Bucks; Extracts from the 'Third Annual Report of the Certified Voluntary Boarding-Out Committee for the Parish of Birmingham;' and the Leeds Ladies' Memorial. Printed at the *Express* Office, Hampstead.

APPENDIX No. 2.

EXTRACT FROM A LETTER, JANUARY 19, 1876.

‘I hope you will support some less questionable mode of meeting the present exigency than the establishment of a new kind of feeding-school. To relieve parents from their responsibility is as bad for them as for their children, but of late years this has been done upon such a scale that it has become the principal source from which the class of neglected street-children is recruited. Each case ought to be separately investigated, and dealt with according to its merits—either prosecuting the parents for neglecting their children, if they are able to provide for them; or assisting them, if they are unable to do so; or taking the child entirely in hand, if it is a real orphan. Mr. Peek’s Fund is administered on this principle; and it has already brought to light the fact that even well-to-do artisans, receiving from 30s. to 40s. a week, spend their earnings at the public-house and throw their children upon charity. If we are to make the next generation better than the present, we must direct our attention to this prolific root of the prevailing evil. So far from being more expensive than wholesale feeding and clothing, it is only by testing and discriminating that the available funds can be made to go as far as possible. The main effect of what is now in progress in London is to revive and enforce the responsibility of parents, and it has become apparent that even a smaller fund than Mr. Peek’s would have accomplished great results.

‘Much harm has been done by the assumption of the existence of a pariah caste too degraded in its habits to associate with the children of respectable working-people. If the children said to belong to this class were scrutinised and dealt with in the manner proposed, they would soon be brought within manageable limits; but of this, at any rate, there can be no doubt—that to isolate such children is to perpetuate their degradation, whereas if they are educated with the class immediately above them, they rapidly become absorbed into it by the force of emulation, example, self-respect, and other elevating motives. Your experience of the

Boarding-out System must have convinced you of the power of this principle of assimilation. The way out of our present dilemma has to be sought in this direction, and not in that of making rags and dirt and semi-starvation credentials for a special description of charity, till they have lost much of the disgrace which ought to attach to them, and are even regarded with interest and favour, as if they were the badge of and order of merit.

‘Whatever we may say about the importance of enforcing parental responsibility, there can be no doubt that to dispense parents from the primary duty of feeding and clothing their children, and from the habits which the regular performance of this duty engenders, taking our chance of recovering the cost from them after their children have been cared for by others quite independently of them, is not the way to encourage the growth of parental feeling. In endeavouring to make things better than nature has made them, we have seriously impaired the divine institution which is the master-key of all human improvement—the *family*. While, on the one hand, we are laboriously providing a substitute for it in the boarding-out system, on the other, we are breaking down the thing itself by our Ragged Schools, Soup Kitchens, and Orphanages which are really Orphanages only to a limited extent, being in the main vast establishments into which families are broken up and dispersed, leaving the mother to go her own way without motherly responsibility or affection.

‘*Properly handled*, the School-Board system offers an opportunity of reknitting the family tie—which has been miserably unravelled by the misuse of Poor Law and Charity, especially in our large towns—and of reabsorbing our lapsed class into the body of the community; but this advantage, which in a country like ours is not inferior to the primary object of giving to all classes a good education, would be seriously impaired by the revival of the Ragged-School system under the name of “Day-feeding Industrial Schools.” The original founders of Ragged Schools deserve all honour for having led the way in taking up the cause of our neglected street children. They did all that could be done at the time, but a more comprehensive and perfect remedy has now been provided, and the former cannot be continued without injury to the health of the patient.’

